

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

3-63-22

January 19, 1953

My dear Mr. Director:

The President today signed an Executive Order entitled "National Security Medal."

Very sincerely yours,

William J. Hopkins
WILLIAM J. HOPKINS
Executive Clerk

General Walter Bedell Smith, U.S.A.
Director of Central Intelligence,
Washington, D. C.

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Review of this document by CIA has determined that

CIA has no objection to declassify
it contains information of CIA
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It contains nothing of CIA interest
Date 2/20/81 Reviewer [redacted]

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C O P Y

**THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington, D. C.**

January 19, 1953

Dear Mr. Director:

Pursuant to Executive Order 10431 signed by me this date, I hereby authorize you to make awards of the National Security Medal in accordance with the attached regulations, which I hereby approve.

You are also authorized to prepare for the President's approval such further rules and regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of Executive Order 10431, as may be necessary from time to time to accomplish its purposes.

Very sincerely yours,

/s/ Harry Truman

**Honorable Walter B. Smith
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D. C.**

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EXECUTIVE ORDER 10431

NATIONAL SECURITY MEDAL

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the United States, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. There is hereby established a medal to be known as the National Security Medal with accompanying ribbons and appurtenances. The medal and its appurtenances shall be of appropriate design, approved by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council.
2. The National Security Medal may be awarded to any person, without regard to nationality, including members of the armed forces of the United States, for distinguished achievement or outstanding contribution on or after July 26, 1947, in the field of intelligence relating to the national security.
3. The decoration established by this order shall be awarded by the President of the United States or, under regulations approved by him, by such person or persons as he may designate.
4. No more than one National Security Medal shall be awarded to any one person, but for subsequent services justifying an award, a suitable device may be awarded to be worn with the Medal.
5. Members of the armed forces of the United States who are awarded the decoration established by this order are authorized to wear the medal and the ribbon symbolic of the award, as may be authorized by uniform regulations approved by the Secretary of Defense.
6. The decoration established by this order may be awarded posthumously.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

DRAFT

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12 January 1953

THE NATIONAL SECURITY MEDAL

The early historical records of our country show recognition of the vital importance of obtaining accurate intelligence for guidance on matters of national interest. In this connection General George Washington in a letter to Colonel Elias Dayton, dated July 26, 1777, stated "The necessity of procuring good intelligence is apparent and need not be further urged." A General Order issued August 7, 1782 at the headquarters of the Continental Army, Newburgh, New York provided that badges of distinction be conferred on veteran non-commissioned officers and soldiers and provision for the award known as the Badge of Military Merit or the Decoration of the Purple Heart was made by the following language:

"The General ever desirous to cherish virtuous ambition in his soldiers as well as to foster and encourage every species of Military merit directs that whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings over the left breast the figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk edged with narrow lace or finding.

"The road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is thus open to all. This order is also to have retrospect to the earliest stages of the war and to be considered as a permanent one"

The first two Purple Heart awards were for valor in battle. The third Purple Heart rewarded a very different kind of service, performed by Sergeant Daniel Bissell through many months, inconspicuously and in secret. In this connection under General Orders of the Continental Army for Sunday, June 8, 1783, there is the following paragraph:

"Serjeant Bissell of the 2^d Connecticut regt having performed some important services, within the immediate knowledge of the Commander in chief, in which the fidelity, perseverance, and good sense of the said serjeant Bissell were conspicuously manifested; it is therefore ordered that he be honored with the badge of Merit, he will call at Headquarters on tuesday next for the insignia and certificate to which he is hereby entitled."

The citation begins by stating:

"It hath ever been an established maxim in the American Service that the Road to Glory was open to all."

It has been stated that the road of Daniel Bissell led through extremes of peril, self-sacrifice and the shadows of disgrace.

The award of the Purple Heart was discontinued, however, and when subsequently revived was used as an award for the recognition of wounds received in action against the enemy.

Despite the early recognition in our country's history of the importance of intelligence there has never, until this time been created a decoration solely to reward outstanding performance in the field of intelligence.

It is for this purpose, then that the National Security Medal has been created - to honor service in a field of vital importance to the nation and one in which proper recognition has heretofor been lacking.